

REMARKS

I. Office Action Summary

Claims 69-74 and 81-108 are pending. Claims 69, 91 and 101 are the independent claims. In the Office Action mailed February 26, 2007, the Examiner accepted the terminal disclaimer but provided a new rejection. Claims 69-70, 73-74, 99, 101-102 and 104 are rejected as anticipated by Smith et al. (U.S. 5,031,613) under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Claims 91-97 were indicated as allowed and claims 71-72, 81-90, 98, 100, 103 and 105-were indicated as allowable if rewritten in Independent form.

II. Update of Priority Information

Applicant thanks the Examiner for pointing out the typographical error in the first paragraph concerning the serial number of application no. 08/787,013. Applicant has corrected this number accordingly. Pursuant to the Examiner's request, the patent number of now issued 6,729,334 has also been added.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection over Smith (U.S. 5,031,613).

CLAIM 69

Although Applicant disagrees with the rejection of claim 69, Applicant has amended claim 69 to incorporate all of the subject matter of claim 98 which was indicated as allowable by the Examiner. Claims 70-74 and 99-100 depend from independent claim 69, therefore their allowability directly follows from the allowability of independent claim 69.

CLAIM 101

Although Applicant disagrees with the rejection of claim 101, Applicant has amended claim 101 to incorporate the "j-shaped" subject matter of claim 105 which was indicated as allowable by the Examiner. Claims 81-90, 102-103 and 106-108 depend from independent claim 101, therefore their allowability directly follows from the allowability of independent claim 101.

IV. New Claims 109-119

Applicant has added independent claims 109 and 115.

Claim 109 incorporates the subject matter of original claim 69 and claim 100, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. New dependent claims 110-114 generally correspond to original claims 99 and 71-74.

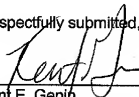
Claim 115 incorporates the subject matter of claim 101 and claim 103, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. New dependent claims 116-119 generally correspond to original claims 104 and 106-108.

V. Conclusion

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claims 91-97 and agrees that these distinguish over the cited art. Although Applicant disagrees with the rejections over Smith, Applicant has amended claims 69 and 101, and added new independent claims 109 and 115, to incorporate subject matter indicated as allowable by the Examiner in order to expedite allowance of the remaining claims. Claims 71, 81, 103, 106 and 108 have been amended to correct dependencies brought about by the amendments of claims 69 and 101 and/or minor typographical errors. Claims 98 and 104-105 have been canceled. Applicant reserves the right to refile a continuation application to pursue the unamended versions of the claims.

If any issues remain or questions arise, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to expedite processing of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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